

Victim Impact Statement - _____, father of: _____

When you become a father, there is an interesting “something” that switches in your mind and psyche about who you are and what new responsibilities you now have. It’s a unique shift in which you feel like your heart grows bigger than you ever thought it could and you are filled with a tremendous amount of love for your whole family.....and especially for your children. It’s a love that recognizes and instills in you the mindset that there is nothing you wouldn’t do to provide for and/or to protect them. This love seems even more amplified for a father when it comes to his daughters.....and for me, even more so when it comes to my youngest daughter.....our “baby girl”.

Although my children are not my biological children, they are MINE just the same. So, it goes without saying, that as a father, these are the feelings and responsibilities that I proudly and unashamedly hold onto. But I also realize that as a father, as a parent, we can’t protect them from everything in life; not from heartache, or disappointment, failures, or the challenges we all tend to face simply from living in this world. And that’s a difficult enough truth to deal with....as a father. But we try anyway, and we are there for them in all those situations.

But when something happens outside of the “normal” challenges of life, there is no preparation for that. There is a stinging sense of failure a father feels.....a failure that I now feel. Because I couldn’t protect her, I couldn’t intervene, I couldn’t be there to keep her safe and to keep this predator away from her. That failure is a sharp and deep cutting, long lasting hurt that I carry with me, almost as a constant reminder, that I could not fulfill for my youngest, my responsibilities or live up to my role as father. And though I know deep down that this situation was out of my control, it doesn’t stop me from feeling that failure, that hurt and ultimately a restless, incessant feeling of anger.

And all of that is only amplified by the fear and terror that haunts me by the idea that on a number of occasions, this predator was able to lure and cajole my daughter into “disappearing” with him from school and/or work....institutions I trusted and had faith in to keep her safe in those times when I couldn’t be there. His use of school resources to be able to reach her only further terrorizes me with the question, is there anywhere safe these days for our children? To come to the realization that this monster planned and schemed and was ultimately successful in taking _____ off school campus or away from work; to know that he could lure her into his car and drive her to places unknown to me and for lengths of time that I would only come to know through a police report, haunts me to this day. It’s unsettling, to say the least, to recognize that someone could take your daughter without your knowing, only made worse by the very real threat of human trafficking and kidnapping. How can you help from not constantly running through in your mind, all the possibilities of her “disappearing” potentially ending in an even worse outcome, had the Sheriffs not been able to stop to this individual?

But my pride, my ego, my own personal hell I go through with all of this is a distant second to the pain I feel for [redacted]; of having to watch her lose her joy and descend into depression, for her to feel a sense of hopelessness and despair. To watch her wrestle with suicidal thoughts and thoughts of worthlessness over the past year has probably been the toughest for me. My heart aches for her as she has had to work through her own regret and recognition of having been manipulated and used for no other reason than sexual pleasure. This isn't a case of a first boyfriend, puppy love, or even high school sweethearts. This is a fully grown adult man who manipulated and took advantage of my baby girl....a little girl....a child....by disguising himself as a "friend" and as a "teacher" who could "prepare" her for her first boyfriend. It is disgusting to know that [redacted] was targeted; her innocence was targeted. She was tricked, fooled, and used out of evil, selfish, desires, simply to bring one individual personal pleasure.....not considering what he would be taking or robbing from her or even us as a family. Not considering the damage he would be doing to her mental health, her view of men, her future relationships, and even her understanding and experience of physical intimacy. Only time will tell the extent of how much damage he has caused.

As a Christian, I have experienced the grace and forgiveness that Jesus extends to us all. And I'm well aware that in response, we too are meant to extend that same grace and forgiveness to others as they wrong us. I pray that in time I might be able to say "I forgive you for what you have done to my daughter and to my family", but that day has not come yet. You have brought hurt and pain, long lasting wounds to my whole family. But my heart also breaks for your family, and your parents; for the pain you have undoubtedly caused them through your choices and actions. I don't wish that upon them or anyone. And because there is nothing redeeming yet in any of this whole situation, the only consolation that I can find, is that you will not be able to harm my daughter or my family anymore, or at least for a considerable amount of time.